

MATTHEW BOULTON. The Dunvegan Castle Toasting Cheese Dish
made in Birmingham in 1807 by Matthew Boulton.

Sold



Description

The Dish is rectangular in form with a rim, and side handles, decorated with gadrooning. Each side also displays hinged sections, by which the hot water compartment, below, can be filled. The domed cover terminates in a lobed, globe, finial standing on a stepped platform. The Dish stands on four bun feet and the cover can be removed by taking out the hinge pin. The front of the cover is also engraved with a contemporary Scottish Armorial, with supporters each side, and motto below, engraved on a banner. The piece, unusually, also has its rectangular interior pans, where the toasted cheese would have been placed and which would be presented when ready for eating. Each pan has a side handle, is fully marked, and engraved with the family Crest, with the Motto above. Cheese Dishes are seldom found intact, with their original pans. The Dish is fully marked on the base and with the maker's mark, town mark and sterling mark on the inside of the cover, where the finial is attached. As we have intimated, all of the interior pans are fully marked. This piece is in quite excellent condition and is of an exceptional weight. The Arms, Crest and Motto are those of Macleod of MacLeod and solely for the Chief of the Clan. They are therefore those of John Norman MacLeod 1788-1835, 24th Chief of the Clan, in which he succeeded his father Major General Norman MacLeod. John married Anne Stevenson and had nine children. He was M.P for Sudbury, Suffolk, 1828-30. His seat was Dunvegan Castle, Isle of Skye, Scotland. An image of the castle is shown. Among the innovations of the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century were specialised dishes for melting cheese on toast. The cheese toaster is equipped with a base hot water jacket, which can be filled on both sides. Squares of toasted bread were thereby kept warm while the cheese layered on top melted and bubbled by the heat of an open fire. The cover was raised to an angle and secured with a silver chain affixed to a ring on the finial and hooked to another ring at the rear. The reflective interior of the cover aided the process of melting the toasting cheese. Cheese Toasters are extremely rare, however this is the first time we have seen one coming from the Boulton workshops. It is our opinion that it may well have been a special commission and, therefore, unique. Matthew Boulton was an important individual in British history, hence his portrait being on the £ 50 English note. Length: 12 inches, 30 cm. Width: 6.5 inches, 16.25 cm. Height, to the top of the finial: 3.7 inches, 9.25 cm. Weight: 49oz.